VITAL-EQA PROGRAM
EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR NUTRITIONAL MARKERS

Wageningen University and Research Centre is an internationally leading knowledge institution, making essential contributions to the quality of life with pioneering research and innovative teaching programs in the areas of nutrition and health, sustainable agrosystems, a viable environment and processes of social change. The VITAL-EQA program helps labs maintain and improve the quality of their measurements for biochemical indicators for B-vitamins, CRP, iron, and vitamin A. The Division of Human Nutrition at Wageningen University collaborates with CDC on the VITAL-EQA program.

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How do I enroll in the VITAL-EQA program?

If you are interested in the VITAL-EQA program, send the following information to vitaleqaprogram@cdc.gov or micronutrient.hne@wur.nl

1. Name: _____
2. Title: _____
3. Institution: _____
4. Mailing address: _____
   _____
5. E-mail address: _____
6. Phone and Fax numbers: _____
   _____
7. Lab methods used for measuring nutrition markers in serum including B-vitamins, CRP, iron, and vitamin A:

_____
_____
_____

When are the samples shipped to participating labs?

Two shipments of serum samples are sent per year (May and September). Each shipment includes 9 serum samples to be run in duplicate over a period of 3 consecutive days.

Participating labs must be able to receive samples sent on dry ice, retrieve them from customs at the airport, and be responsible for any costs associated with customs, if any. Labs must also commit to complete sample analyses and provide results within a specified timeline (about 6 weeks).

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The Global Micronutrient Laboratory at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention plays an active role in the CDC-wide IMMPaCt program (International Micronutrient Malnutrition Prevention and Control Team). Through IMMPaCt, CDC contributes its skills and resources to the global effort to eliminate micronutrient malnutrition. The VITAL-EQA program helps labs maintain and improve the quality of their measurements for biochemical indicators for B-vitamins, CRP, iron, and vitamin A. The VITAL-EQA program is a collaborative effort between CDC and Wageningen University.

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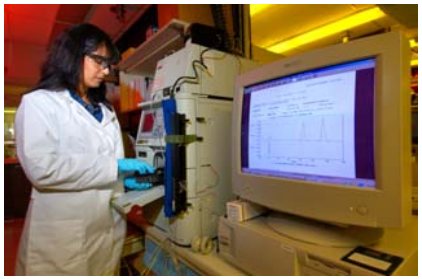
International Activities of the Global Micronutrient Laboratory Program

The aim of CDC's Global Micronutrient Laboratory Program is to apply state-of-the-art laboratory science to eliminate micronutrient malnutrition worldwide. The goals of this program are as follows:

- Build lab capacity through technical support, training, and technology transfer for epidemiologic studies, health surveys, and evaluations of nutrition interventions.
- Support the development of low-technology methods and "field-friendly" technologies for assessing nutritional status.
- Develop reference methods and materials as an accuracy base.
- Provide external quality assurance programs for nutritional indicators.



What is the VITAL-EQA Program?

The maintenance of high quality labs measuring biochemical indicators is essential, because the results generated are used to direct government policy about supplementation, food fortification, and other nutritional interventions. As part of the global effort to strengthen the capacity of nutrition labs, Wageningen University and CDC established the VITAL-EQA program.

The VITAL-EQA program is a standardization program designed to provide labs measuring nutritional markers in serum with an independent assessment of their analytical performance. The program assists labs in monitoring the degree of variability and bias in their assays. Information received from the program can then be used to:

- Eliminate bias or precision problems in the assay system;
- Confirm the quality of analysis and increase the confidence level of the lab.

Participation in VITAL-EQA is voluntary and free of charge. Results are not used for accreditation or certification.

Research at the Division of Human Nutrition at Wageningen University

Research in the Division of Human Nutrition is directed towards studying the role of diet and other lifestyle factors in human health and well being, including the understanding of the underlying mechanisms from a biological and behavioural perspective. Current research includes studies on the prevention of cardiovascular and gastrointestinal diseases, obesity, and undernutrition carried out in industrialized and developing countries.

The three-pronged approach in research focuses on:

- The factors determining sensory perception of foods, food and nutrient intake, and the effects of nutrition on physiological processes, nutritional status, and bodily functions.
- The role of nutrition and other lifestyle factors in disease aetiology and health promotion. The quantitative relationships between these factors and the risk of disease are being examined with particular emphasis on how the relationships are modified by individual susceptibility.
- The nutritional regulation of metabolic pathways at the level of cells and organs.

For more information visit:
http://www.ftns.wau.nl/nutepi/uk